

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43 are pending in this case. Claims 10, 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 27-30, 32, 33, 36, 39, and 41-43 are amended by the present amendment. Amended Claims 10, 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 27-30, 32, 33, 36, 39, and 41-43 are supported by the original claims. Amended Claims 10, 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 27-30, 32, 33, 36, 39, and 41-43 add no new matter.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Mori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,995,802, herein "Mori") in view of Nagase et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-227725, herein "Nagase"). Claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Mori in view of Kobayashi et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 08-110669, herein "Kobayashi"). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Mori in view of Kobayashi and further in view of Noguchi et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 10-260590). Claims 12 and 14 were objected to as dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise were indicated as including allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1-4, 6-8, 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43 are allowed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 1-4, 6-8, 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43 and the indication that Claims 12 and 14 include allowable subject matter.

Claims 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 27-30, 32, 33, 36, 39, and 41-43 are amended to correct misspellings or antecedent basis errors. Applicant believes no new issues are raised by the amendments and that those claims are not narrowed in any aspect, and thus applicant believes those claims are still allowable.

With regard to the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Mori in view of Nagase, applicant respectfully traverses the rejection in light of the clarifying amendment presented herewith.

Amended independent Claim 10 recites a device for driving an endless belt comprising, *inter alia*, “a stationary guide body adjoining said drive roller and continuously contacting the belt at a side where said rotary body is positioned.”

Nagase discloses an image forming device comprising a belt 14a driven by a drive roller 14d.¹ A guide plate 171 is located a distance “d” above the belt.² Applicant respectfully submits that Nagase does not teach or suggest that guide plate 171 is ***continuously in contact*** with the belt, as Nagase clearly teaches that guide plate 171 is located a distance “d” above the surface of the belt. Thus, applicant respectfully submits that Nagase does not teach or suggest a stationary guide body adjoining said drive roller and continuously contacting the belt at a side where said rotary body is positioned, as recited in Claim 10.

Since Mori and Nagase do not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, each and every element of Claim 10, applicant respectfully submits that Claim 10 is patentable thereover.

With regard to the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Mori in view of Kobayashi, applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Kobayashi teaches an image forming device including a transfer belt 16 and an inner belt 17A. Inner belt 17A is on the opposite side of transfer belt 16 from photoconductive drum 11. Guide 17D is in contact with inner belt 17A.³ Thus, Kobayashi teaches that guide 17D is on an ***opposite*** side of transfer belt 16 from photoconductive drum 11. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that Kobayashi does not teach or suggest a stationary guide

¹See Nagase, Solution and Figure 13.

²Nagase, Figures 13 and 14.

³See Kobayashi, Constitution and Figures 1 and 2.

body adjoining said drive roller and continuously contacting the belt at a side where the rotary body is positioned, as recited in Claim 10.

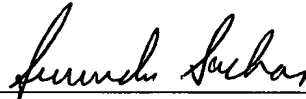
Since Mori and Kobayashi do not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, each and every element of Claim 10, applicant respectfully submits that Claim 10 is patentable thereover.

Claims 11-14 are dependent from Claim 10, which applicant respectfully submits is patentable. Thus, Claims 11-14 are also believed to be patentable.

Accordingly, the outstanding rejections are traversed and the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423